



SENIORS FOR SOCIAL ACTION ONTARIO

POLICY STATEMENT – AGING IN PLACE

NON-PROFIT ASSISTED LIVING OPTIONS FOR OLDER ADULTS

November 25, 2024

Background

In 2022 HomeEquity Bank and IPSOS conducted a poll of adults 45+. [Their research found that 95% of Canadians in this age group wanted to be able to age in place](#) to maintain their independence, comfort, and dignity. 92% agreed that they would prefer in-home care over moving to a long-term care institution.

Purpose

In light of the strong support among older adults to age in place this policy statement aims to address the requirement for assisted living options to allow them to do so.

Non-profit Assisted Living provides daily care to older adults who continue to live in their own homes. Residents may receive prepared meals, housekeeping, security checks, medication management, friendly visiting, and personalized help with activities of daily living as well as other supports.

Assisted living services are provided by community-based non-profit organizations and are separate from the Ontario government's Ontario Health atHome program, although they may collaborate with them in providing in-home services to elders.

For-Profit Residential Assisted Living

At the present time residential Assisted Living Services tend to be primarily available through private, for-profit retirement homes, but in many cases the cost of these is out of reach of individuals on fixed incomes. Retirement homes also often have the same problems as long-term care facilities – lack of adequate infection prevention and control causing outbreaks of RSV, COVID, and influenza, and use of agency staff.

Retirement homes can also be sold and services they provide can deteriorate as a result. Sometimes, [retirement homes close, stranding their residents](#).

Regulation and enforcement is difficult when dealing with the large corporations that own the facilities while also providing the support services. They are in a position to challenge any enforcement attempts in court.

Non-Profit Assisted Living Makes More Sense

Assisted Living services can be offered through organizations like the [Victorian Order of Nurses](#) and other non-profit community-based agencies to provide personal hygiene care, assistance with routine activities of daily living, essential homemaking services, and safety reassurance checks. Home visits may occur multiple times throughout the day, during evenings, weekends, or overnight according to individuals' needs and preferences (Victorian Order of Nurses, 2024).

Assisted living services allow close monitoring of individuals' health conditions and R.N.'s are able to be in contact with family physicians if a person's health needs change. Care plans are more flexible than in Ontario Health atHome programs, and can be altered quickly based on individuals' needs.

Most importantly care and support are provided by non-profits separately from building ownership. When care and buildings are combined and delivered by the same operator, we see the failures we have witnessed in long-term care facilities and retirement homes. Buildings need to be separated from care, and care needs to be delivered on a non-profit basis.

The Problem

The Ontario Government is currently [funding institutionalization of older adults by pouring over \\$6 billion into building, refurbishing, and expanding long-term care facilities](#) rather than investing more heavily in non-profit assisted living services to maintain older adults in their own homes and communities.

Cost Effectiveness of In-Home Care

In-home support of this nature continues to be less expensive than institutional care with a savings of at least \$73.90 per patient per day. [On average, providing in-home care of this nature costs \\$127.10 per day, while care in a long-term care facility costs \\$201.00 per day](#) - including pay raises for PSWs funded by the Ontario Government. More importantly, non-profit assisted living services address older adults' desires to age in place in their own homes and communities. They integrate care so that in a community housing building, or municipal seniors' building, for example, PSW's from one non-profit agency would be assigned to

residents of that building and would be well known to them rather than having a revolving door of different PSW's from different providers coming in.

SSAO Position on Non-Profit Assisted Living Services

Seniors for Social Action Ontario supports several options that provide integrated services and supports to older adults where they live in rent geared to income or community housing buildings and, in some cases the neighborhoods surrounding them.

[PACE \(Program of All Inclusive Care of the Elderly\)](#) is a collaborative effort by local service providers to locate services and supports tied to the needs of residents in buildings that predominantly serve elders. [Burlington PACE Community Hub is one example.](#)

The [Peel Senior Link Hub and Spoke model](#) is another.

[Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities \(NORCs\)](#) like the [OASIS model in Kingston](#) and the [100 Upper Madison model in Toronto](#) provide social support and address other needs of residents in the buildings they serve – some of which may be apartments, condos, cooperatives, or co-housing.

Organized by elders themselves with the assistance of allies from [Queen's University](#) and the [University Health Centre NORC Innovation Hub](#), these programs also help to prevent older adults from being hospitalized, thereby reducing pressure on hospital emergency rooms and admissions. Some may also provide assistance to those returning from hospital.

By building a sense of community where people support one another, NORCs help people to age in place and prevent institutionalization by addressing many of the factors that cause it.

Seniors for Social Action Ontario is very supportive of all of these models and has taken the initiative to assist NORCs to expand across Ontario by convening a provincial meeting of key stakeholders and setting up a NORC Facebook page found here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/569151332324342>

Seniors for Social Action Ontario continues to call on the Government of Ontario to support non-profit assisted living services for elders where they live as an aging in place strategy.